

THE STOLEN  
GOD and other  
Experiences of  
Indian Palace Life

By Dr. NINA OTTMANN



THE CAREY PRESS

To my friend  
with blessings

H.J.

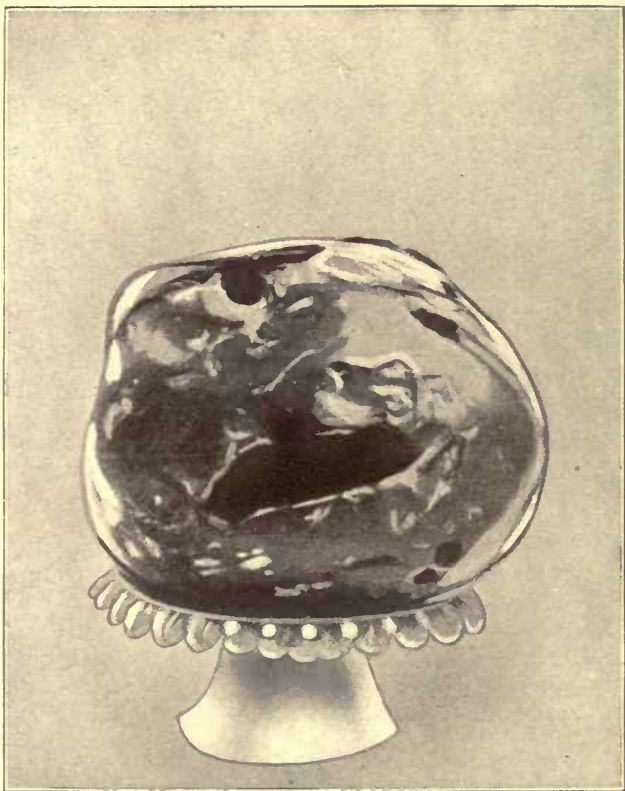
June 13<sup>th</sup> 1927

# THE STOLEN GOD

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THE SALAGRAMA: THE STOLEN GOD.  
A FRAGMENT OF BLACK AMMONITE. (*See page 60.*)

# THE STOLEN GOD and other Experiences of Indian Palace Life

By Dr. NINA OTTMANN

MEDICAL MISSIONARY  
(ENGLISH BAPTIST MISSION)



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THE STOLEN GOD

and other Experiments

in Fiction, Drama, &c.

BY J. M. COLEMAN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

THE AUTHOR

LONDON

1881

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## PREFACE.

IT has been my privilege to visit, in a professional capacity, seven Palaces of Indian princes, and the following chapters describe some of my varied experiences. I describe these incidents with a desire to throw light upon the characteristics and life of the women of high caste and wealthy surroundings in sequestered places in India, women whose silent influence is moulding the lives of the gallant and loyal princes of that great land. The mute appeal of these women for light and life is obvious in these pages, and calls for an immediate response. The incident of the Stolen God is the subject matter of one chapter only, but I have used this title to convey the suggestion which must arise from my record as a whole—the utter futility of Hinduism.

This narrative has also been written to influence the hearts of God's people: not only to stir these hearts to sympathy for these women, but in the hope that the record may lead some of God's children to give gifts for the propagation of the Gospel. I hope that it may influence others to

## PREFACE.

sacrifice their lives in letting the Light shine in these dark places, and in bringing to the hearts of this great people a Saviour for their redemption, a King for their devotion, and an incentive for their sacrifice.

In my study of certain of the customs described in this little book I have been surprised to find how they vary in different areas, though the essentials of belief are the same. Each caste seems to give its own interpretation to the ritual of things, though it maintains the *idea* intact ; and of course local conditions do not permit of uniformity in external ceremonies all over India. For instance, in regard to the ceremonial purification recorded in Chapter XIII., I asked three Brahmin women to tell me their custom in this ceremony. All maintained the necessity for the purification, but one stated that in her caste the use of one hundred and eight balls of saffron in the bath—the saffron being rubbed on like soap—was prescribed for the ceremony ; the other two had varied interpretations, and none of these agreed with the details of the rite as performed by the Rani. Diversity in the carrying out of any religious idea is as common in the East as denominationalism is in the West.

It will be understood that some of the matters

## PREFACE.

narrated have been generalised to avoid personal references which might perhaps frustrate this kind of work in future. The curtain is lifted not to create laughter over incongruities, nor to contrast light with darkness, but with the definite objective of multiplied effort for the peoples in darkness in this land. No other reason could atone for what may appear to be a breach of medical confidence.

The wonderful loyalty of India at this present national crisis reveals that the peoples of this land are worthy that we should minister to them of the unspeakable love of Christ.

RUSSELKONDA,	NINA OTTMANN,
INDIA.	<i>Medical Missionary,</i>
	<i>English Baptist Mission.</i>
November 30th, 1914.	



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## FOREWORDS.

### I.

A REALISTIC picture of medical missionary experience, such as Dr. Ottmann writes in the following pages, needs no foreword. She gives us a striking example of the part medical missions are playing in the Christian Movement in an almost unknown part of India. Face to face with impenetrable superstition, and confronted by an apparently indestructible taste for idolatry, the servant of Christ who is a medico allows the quiet influence of kindly thought and deed to proclaim the Gospel of God's love. There is no quicker way to India's heart than kindness, and this story, like many others, proves that medical missions are necessary and effective because of the matchless opportunity they afford of passing through closed doors and purdahed rooms, into the darkness of Indian palace or slum life. Let entrance be gained, and both knowledge and light are spread.

This booklet will, I know, serve the cause. It will help to pass away a pleasant hour and give an insight, not often obtained, of Hinduism as it is

## FOREWORDS.

to-day in the precincts of some rural palaces. There is the grace of humour as well as an undertone of sadness in these snapshots of Missionary life. Do not miss Dr. Ottmann's smile in the incidents she so graphically describes. She has yet to tell us what happened to the Stolen God.

CALCUTTA.

HERBERT ANDERSON,  
*Baptist Missionary Society.*

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## II.

I have been asked to introduce this little book to its readers, perhaps because it was my privilege to hear at first hand the details of Dr. Ottmann's visits to the Rani, as they proceeded. We laughed together over many of her experiences, but laughter was followed by very deep sympathy with the higher aims of the doctor to aid the spiritual as well as the physical recovery of her refractory patient. I believe that a like prayerful interest will be quickened in the hearts of those who read her story.

We are accustomed to speak of the "purdah system" as one of the great evils of Indian social life—the cause of demoralization of body and mind. But those who have to do with the women of the

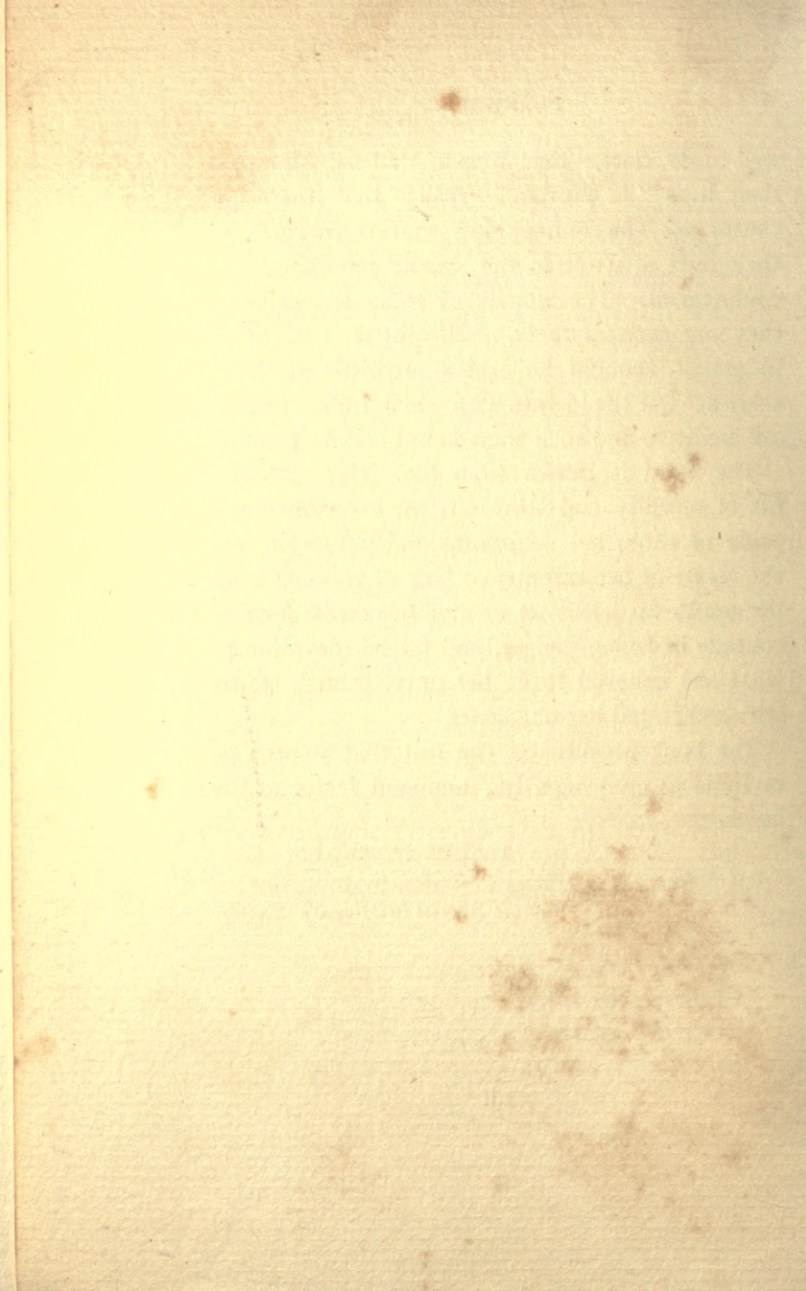
## FOREWORDS.

well-to-do class,—the women, that is, who pass their lives “in purdah,”—realize that there are causes for the unhappiness and restlessness of their lives apart from the deadly monotony and confinement. The women of India *become* what they *are expected to be*. Self-control, balance of judgment, thought for others, altruistic service—these are not the virtues with which Indian women are credited, and such they do not seek to acquire.

The Rani is drawn from life. Her alternate fits of servility and self-assertion, her vanity and pride of rank, her selfishness and petulance are the result of her training or lack of training from her youth up. But let us give her credit for real courage in facing danger, and for her devotion to what she believed to be her duty, though superstition dictated her obedience.

The book accentuates the fact that woman is, in India as elsewhere, the dominant factor in the home.

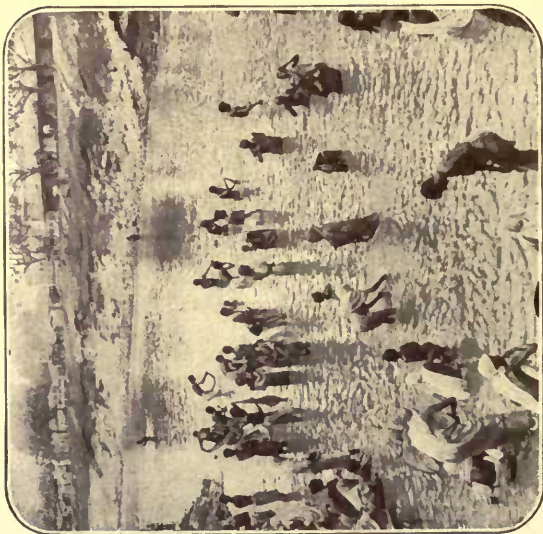
ISABEL M. ANGUS,  
CALCUTTA. *Women's Missionary Association*  
*of the Baptist Missionary Society.*







A HINDU SUN-WORSHIPPER.



HINDUS BATHING AT KALI GHAT.

## CHAPTER I.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE PALACE AND ITS PEOPLE.

A TELEGRAM which came to the doctor at the Baptist Zenana Mission, Berhampore, proved to be a call from a Rajah in Orissa, whose Rani needed medical help. A hasty arranging of plans, a five hours' railway journey northwards, and the train stopped at midnight at its destination, Cuttack, the principal station of the Mission in Orissa.

The remainder of the journey included a long trip across the river Mahanuddy in the brilliant moonlight, in a very primitive kind of boat poled by two boatmen. The night was ideal and the air cool. The boat quietly glided along over the shimmering water, whose beauty the silver moon enhanced by its brilliancy; the soft lapping of the wavelets was restful, and all was silent except for the wild shriek of a startled bird. Only the fishermen accustomed to this river know where the rocks and shallows are. In some places we struck the soft earth and got off, after strenuous

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endeavours, with a great lurch ; in other places the water was so deep that the long bamboo poles could not touch the bottom, and we just drifted on. Here and there in the shallows we saw the dim outline of a crocodile.

On the other side of the river were two elephants, one for the luggage and the other for me. It was my first experience of a long elephant journey, and I fervently hoped, after the momentary novelty of the ride was over, that it might be my last. We had seventeen miles to cover, and the memory of that journey makes me feel tired even now.

The elephants knelt in obedience to a command from the mahout, and I climbed on to the back of the milder-looking of the two creatures by means of a ladder. The Rajah's servant, after placing my luggage on his playful young male elephant's back, climbed up by the animal's tail.

It was quite early morning when we started our elephant ride, but it began to grow hot as the sun rose higher in the heavens. My elephant had on his back a large thick cushion or howdah, made of river reeds, and a primitive seat with two horizontal iron bars. One was tempted to rest against these, but the reward was excruciating muscular pains the next day, for the movement of the elephant was extremely trying.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS—PALACE AND PEOPLE.

The journey was uneventful except for the trumpeting and capering of the young elephants, as now and again they stole corn from the fields and quenched their thirst at the little streams. We passed through some villages, and saw the life Sir Edwin Arnold depicted so wonderfully :—

The painted streets alive with hum of noon,  
The traders cross-legged mid their spice and grain,  
The buyers with their money in their cloth,  
The war of words to cheapen this or that,  
. . . . .  
The singing bearers with their palanquins,  
. . . . .  
The housewives bearing water from the well  
With balanced chatties, and athwart their hips  
The black-eyed babies : the fly-swarmed sweetmeat  
shops,  
The weaver at his loom, the cotton box  
Twanging, the millstones grinding meal, the dogs  
Prowling for orts. . . . .

It was midday when we at last reached the town.

The Rajah's State is one of the seventeen dependent territories in the Mahanuddy delta. The Mahanuddy river is 520 miles long, with a catchment area of 52,500 square miles ; this will convey some idea of the enormous extent of the delta. The river near the State which I visited is navigable by flat-bottomed boats carrying about 500 tons. Almost the whole of the State land is low-lying, and part of it is inundated during the

## THE STOLEN GOD.

rainy season. There are terraces for rice cultivation, and the flora comprises many marsh and water plants. One portion of the State has steep slopes of hills; these are covered with dense forests where tigers range, carrying off cattle and men every year.

While I was at the palace I was visited by a man whose face and neck and arms were covered with cruel scars. He told me with much pride that those scars had secured him an annuity and made him a wealthy man; for in this forest there had been a man-eating tiger, which daily took up its position near the road-side, where there was excellent cover, and in the middle of the day seized a foot-passenger or a cartman for its prey. Word was brought to the Rajah of this occurrence, and he sent six men with guns to deal with the beast as they thought fit. These got to the forest, and all went well till the tiger suddenly appeared in their midst while they were slackening their vigilance; then, instead of shooting him, five fled, leaving their weapons behind them, and the sixth, not because he was brave, but because he was too fearful to get away, left his weapon on the ground and climbed the nearest tree, while the tiger sat guard under its branches!

Meanwhile his five comrades returned to the

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS—PALACE AND PEOPLE.

palace, made out as good a tale as they could of their flight, and described the terrible peril of the comrade they had left behind. Immediately the hero who visited me was sent to the rescue ; but when he reached the spot the tiger turned on him, threw him to the ground, and began mauling him. Fortunately the man did not lose his rifle nor his presence of mind, and while he was on his back he slowly lifted the rifle and hit the beast on its head, stunning it. Then, rapidly turning round, he shot it dead. The treed comrade, whose nerves were at highest tension, dropped in fright from his perch to the ground ! The Rajah awarded the hero a gift and a pension, and the surrounding chiefs, hearing of his bravery, showered presents on him.

The lands in the Mahanuddy delta were originally occupied by aboriginal races who fought with their neighbours on the one hand and with wild beasts on the other. The aborigines were driven westward into the hills by early Aryan adventurers, most of whom were Rajputs (kingly caste), who, coming to the great city and temple of Puri on a pilgrimage, remained behind to form kingdoms and dynasties. Some of the chiefs trace their occupation of the territory back 3,600 years. The occupation of Orissa at different times by the Hindus can be traced, apart from history, by the temples erected

## THE STOLEN GOD.

in Orissa by the later Rajput and Hindu conquerors. The temples in Bhubaneswar, dedicated to Siva, were built by these, and another race of Hindu conquerors, who were worshippers of the God Vishnu, built the famous temple of Jagga-nath at Puri and the black Pagoda at Konarak.

In 1764 the civil authority over Orissa was conferred in perpetuity on the East India Company by the Emperor Shah Alam. It was not till 1803, however, that it was conquered and annexed by Lord Wellesley, when the States also passed under the jurisdiction of the British Raj.

The tributary States have no authentic or connected history. The petty princes have their own politics. The chiefs administer rule in more or less primitive fashion, assisted by Dewans (prime ministers) who exercise almost supreme authority. The chief of each State has his own court. These courts are held frequently in the front verandah of the men's palace, the only furniture being, at times, a chair and a bench, and these not quite whole. The statues of two awful animals in lime guard these seats of judgment, but whether they provoke fear or laughter one cannot tell. The people are very subservient ; when they see the Rajahs they stoop down and touch the ground two or three times, and then

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS—PALACE AND PEOPLE.

salute with both hands to their foreheads. The Rajahs are too exalted to notice these greetings.

The British Government has bestowed civil and military powers on the Chief which he exercises himself or hands over to the Dewan ; also authority to punish with fines up to Rs. 1,000 (about £66), two years' imprisonment and 30 stripes.

Judging from the primitive surroundings and the way in which justice is meted out, one is led to expect an inefficient educational arrangement for the masses. Limiting our observation to female education one may find in an area of 168 square miles only 12 elementary schools for girls, the education being given free. This accounts to a great extent for the gross ignorance which prevails over common matters relating to hygiene, sanitation and medicine. It also gives a clue to the difficulty experienced by missionaries in endeavouring to teach new truths to minds so ill prepared to consider them ; minds so vacant naturally have a bias for all kinds of superstitious beliefs, especially when these are accredited by their religious books and teachers.

I stayed at the Visitors' bungalow, which is prettily situated, and in the afternoon was taken in a phaeton to see the Rani.

## THE STOLEN GOD.

The first ordeal was at the men's palace, where one was victimized by rude staring. One is surprised to see the large number of officials in the palace. These are appointed by favour, and often have titles bestowed on them for paltry services rendered to the Rajah ; these titles are generally accompanied by a gift of land ; they are more easily acquired than many a knighthood or medal ! They are given sometimes for blessing the Rajah, for holding his umbrella, perhaps for handing him betel leaves. On one occasion I saw a Rajah give a passing mendicant ten rupees for reciting a brief and indifferent ode to his greatness !

Many Rajahs, born as they are to luxury, are reared to believe themselves demigods, and when they assume authority they are whimsical and have little consideration for their subjects. Self-indulgence, ease, luxury make them old before their time, and in old age they are pitiable objects ; while the constant habit of chewing the betel leaf and the other accessories of the " pan-supari " detract from their personal appearance. They exercise, too, the prerogative of Rajahs, which is to change their minds frequently, much to the chagrin of their subjects. I was present one day when a Rajah changed his mind three times about a journey he was going to take. Early in the

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS—PALACE AND PEOPLE.

morning he started with an affirmative statement, and the people rushed hither and thither to get ready. By ten o'clock this order was cancelled and peremptory commands were given to unpack. At three in the afternoon I was over there again, and to my astonishment an affirmative order was again given and the packing begun. The people casually remarked that it was quite possible they would be unpacking again by midnight, which was quite true, for the journey was not undertaken till three weeks later ! It is fashionable in India to be unpunctual and to keep people waiting. A Mahomedan prince in India kept a special train waiting for him for three weeks. The troops assembled daily, the engine kept up steam, but he came not. All this is the insignia of greatness in which " the East is East and the West is West."

The Rajah of the State which I visited is very religious, and has favoured many shrines and spent much of his substance on priests and temples. It is not an uncommon occurrence to find that in spite of large annual incomes from their States, the Rajahs give little for their subjects' welfare in comparison with what they give to institutions and religious charities by feeding Brahmins and supporting temples in well-recognized centres of Hinduism outside of their provinces. The incen-

## THE STOLEN GOD.

tive for this charity, which is often munificent, may be a desire for popularity or the religious motive of securing merit in the next incarnation. I found the Rajah devout in his rites and ceremonies and very punctilious in the reading of his sacred books and liturgies; and the household priest (whose office is hereditary) is kept very busy attending to the ruler's religious ritual.

The Rajah is the devoted slave of the Rani. According to their sacred books, he is her lord, but in his case, as is the case in other lands, the ruler abroad becomes the ruled in his domestic circle.

Before I was taken to the women's palace, the Rajah gave me a history of the Rani's case, and asked for an immediate diagnosis of the trouble, though I had not seen the patient! I was then shown, with great pride, over the hall where the household gods are. By a primitive arrangement of pulling a rope, the platform on which these gods rested could be moved up and down. The gods were figures in pith covered with tinsel, and the delight of the old man in showing off the trick of the moving figures was very childish.

The Rani received me with great grace and courtesy; she was bedecked with gold, and, after offering me "pan-supari" on a silver salver and

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS—PALACE AND PEOPLE.

garlanding me, she proceeded to tell me her history. She is not handsome nor tall, but she has grace and a refinement all her own, and can be most persuasive and amiable. She cannot bear to have her will crossed and wishes to command everyone. Her surroundings have developed a religious intolerance and exclusiveness which make it impossible for her to accept anything fresh in religious thought, and her life centres round the temple worship, shrines, fasts and pilgrimages. It was a great joy to her that I could speak her language, and she asked many questions, chiefly about food, clothes, England, marriage and jewels.

After an examination, I told her what was the matter with her, and suggested an immediate serious operation. She also had some minor ailments which could be cured by a simple operation.

My visit over I was shown out, and the Rajah kept me for an hour asking about the case, symptoms and operations. Under the circumstances it was not easy to explain anatomical problems to him, and soon after the chaise with the rumbling wheels took me home.

The next day the whole programme was repeated: more questions, more garlands, more courtesies, with the addition of a fee, for I was

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leaving in the afternoon for Cuttack. No decision had been reached about an operation, and it all seemed a waste of time, energy and money. But what aggravated the matter was that apparently little opportunity was afforded me of witnessing for Christ in the palace. The Rajah gave me no chance and the Rani was perfectly indifferent. It was a solemn responsibility that I was alone in having to witness for Christ in that large centre.

After that the elephant again took us back, and once more we heard the sound of the lapping water and the shrill whistle of the train before I settled down to work again at Berhampore.

Some months later the Rani, having made up her mind, was operated on, and there was some improvement, but the more serious trouble remained. It was at this time that her affection for me crystallized into a term of endearment,—namely, “*mother*,” and ever since that time “*mother*” has been my name in the palace. This Indian custom reminds us of the old Roman habit of adoption into the family ; but it is even more than that in effect, for with the adoption, although no monetary obligation is involved, there is created in the heart of the giver a feeling of trust and confidence. So there was established for the Missionary work an entrance into the

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS—PALACE AND PEOPLE.

palace which a medical qualification alone could not have secured.

I had some opportunities on this visit to preach the Gospel, but it fell on unheeding ears.

For six years I did not see these people again. Some tracts were sent to the Rani and a copy of the Bible in her language, but it seemed as though the whole incident was a lost opportunity, a futile journey, a work ending in nothing ; yet it was not so, for God had touched one soul in the palace.

## CHAPTER II.

### MATTERS ECCLESIASTICAL AND ASTROLOGICAL.

WHEN the Rani's condition became more serious I was sent for again, and stayed in a little bungalow on a hill overlooking the town. A temple devoted to Siva was adjacent, with its sacred bull, and a monastery for the training of priests. There was also a free hostel near for fakirs, who flock to the Rajah's country because of his regard for them.

On enquiry I found that the Rajah was very partial to these devotees, because one of them had initiated him into the sacred name. On payment of a fee an elaborate ceremony is performed, and during the recitation of verse and liturgy the priest whispers into the ear of the worshipper the name of a god or goddess three times, with the solemn injunction never to reveal it under pain of loss of salvation. The Bible-woman who works with me had the name of "Rhada Krishna" whispered into her ear in this way for the sum of five rupees. The incantation is done in some

## MATTERS ECCLESIASTICAL AND ASTROLOGICAL.

cases by Brahmins, but other priests also are able to perform it. No man or woman of the higher castes can partake of food offered to ancestors without having been initiated into this "mantram." Ancestral worship is part of a Hindu's life: he cannot afford to cut it out without much damage to his life; for the ancestors have to be invoked at weddings, they are called to propitiate at the sowing of seed, etc., so that the "mantram" becomes an essential to the orthodox Hindu.

At all hours of the day on this hillside I saw these "holy men" whose nakedness and ashes and unkempt hair indicated their profession, but did not betray the state of their hearts. One of them visited me, and on two or three occasions I had long talks with him about his salvation. He said he was seeking salvation, and thought he could get it by this manner of life. He had gone through much privation, many fasts and vigils, to secure fewer rebirths. He could not read Uriya, and so I could not leave books with him.

The life of a fakir is not an easy one, as some imagine it to be. I watched it for two days and was surprised at its extreme severity. Each man had taken a different vow. Again I quote from

## THE STOLEN GOD.

“ The Light of Asia ” which describes these men and their varied vows :

A gaunt and mournful band, dwelling apart,  
Some day and night had stood with lifted arms,  
Till, drained of blood and withered by disease  
Their slowly wasting joints and stiffened limbs  
Jutted from sapless shoulders, like dead forks  
From forest trunks. Others had clenched their hands  
So long and with so fierce a fortitude,  
The claw-like nails grew through the festered palm.  
Some walked on sandals spiked : some with sharp flints  
Gashed breast and brow and thigh, scarred these with fire,  
Threaded their flesh with jungle thorns and spits  
Besmeared with mud and ashes, crouching foul  
In rags of dead men wrapped about their loins.  
Certain who cried five hundred times a day  
The name of Siva, knit with hissing snakes  
About their suntanned necks and hollow flanks  
One palsied foot drawn up against the ham.  
So gathered they a grievous company.  
Crowns blistered by the blazing heat, eyes bleared,  
Sinews and muscles shrivelled, visages  
Haggard and wan as slain men's five days dead :  
.....there one who bruised his pulse  
With bitter leaves lest palate should be pleased :  
And next, a miserable saint self-maimed,  
Eyeless and tongueless, sexless, crippled, deaf ;  
The body by the mind being thus stripped  
For glory of much suffering, and the bliss  
Which they shall win—say holy books—whose love  
Shames gods that send us woe, and makes men gods  
Stronger to suffer than hell is to harm.

The visit to the Rani revealed that six years' delay had made her case very serious. The tumour had assumed enormous proportions and



"THE LIFE OF A FAKIR IS NOT AN EASY ONE, AS SOME  
IMAGINE IT TO BE." (See page 15).



## MATTERS ECCLESIASTICAL AND ASTROLOGICAL.

she was in much suffering ; but throughout her illness her fortitude was most commendable ; indeed, it was regal. She faced the possibility of death with an undisturbed calm, with no tremor of lip, no utterance of fear. I greatly admired her for it. Even if her philosophy of fate with its inevitableness sustained her, she should be accounted a brave woman, because pain is pain to all, and death means to a Hindu eternal *separation*.

In a few words I described to her the operation that would be needed. She asked that it might be put off for six months so that it could be done in the cold weather ; but delay seemed dangerous, and I again urged immediate action. After still further discussion for about two days, a conclusion was almost reached in the affirmative when I was suddenly asked to give an assurance that the Rani would live through the operation !

On the third day a long hour was spent in consultation with the Brahmins about auspicious days and months. Such calculation and discussion was bewildering, except that I held in my hand a six-anna diary, printed by an Indian press, in which selected auspicious days and omens are included ; but since I was not a priest, my information was scorned. At last the operation was decided upon, and it was found that by beginning

## THE STOLEN GOD.

on a certain day, hour and month success would attend their efforts; so it was arranged that the patient should be taken to Calcutta for the operation.

In this connection I might mention that on many occasions during my contact with these people astrological searches were made for propitious times and occasions. Dr. Thurston, in his "Ethnography of Southern India," which is an intensely interesting book, devotes nearly a hundred pages to omens, evil eye, dreams, etc., all of which go into the calculation for finding out auspicious times. No social or domestic event of any importance, and especially no religious ceremony of any consequence, can be carried on save during auspicious days. There is no space in this book to describe these to any extent, but a few of these superstitious beliefs might be mentioned.

The quivering and throbbing of certain parts of the human body are regarded as omens: a quivering sensation in the right arm indicates marriage with a beautiful woman! If it occur in the right eye it promises good luck. A tickling sensation in the right foot foretells that the person has to go on a journey. A woman once consulted me seriously about a muscular twitching in the

## MATTERS ECCLESIASTICAL AND ASTROLOGICAL.

upper lid of her left eye, as she was fearful of disaster. I did nothing for her ; but she returned the next day with the marks of the treatment she had adopted as a cure. She had branded with a red-hot iron the skin above her lid.

Night, but not day, dreams are considered as omens for good or evil. A dream that one is bitten in the shade by a snake or stung by a scorpion is always a sure promise of wealth.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE SECOND RANI, THE HEIR AND THE DEWAN.

THE second Rani is a negligible quantity, though she is the mother of the heir. She is about twenty years younger than her sister-claimant to the Rajah's affections.

About six years ago, as there was no heir to the throne, the Rajah was urged to contract a second marriage. This was during the time of the first operation, so that I was present when the negotiations were taking place. The intended Rani lived some distance away, and, as betrothal etiquette forbade the Rajah to see her, negotiations were carried out by an intermediary party. That this is unsatisfactory even to those who are bound by this custom was proved by the queries made from time to time by the lover regarding his betrothed. "Alas! I have forgotten to enquire whether her teeth are complete," and forthwith a messenger hastened to make this dental enquiry! On the contrary, the lady-love was allowed no

## THE SECOND RANI, THE HEIR AND THE DEWAN.

privilege of enquiry, the honour of having been regarded as the bride-elect being compensation enough for any deficiencies in the lover! Day after day some fresh things that had not been asked about were remembered, and messengers kept going with questions about her eyes, her colour, and whether her fingers and toes were complete and straight.

At last the marriage took place. The Rajahs at their weddings worship a sword, which is a ceremony denoting that they are of the royal soldier caste. The wrist string tied at their marriage, to unite the parties, is made of cotton and wool, a combination peculiar to the soldier caste. On some occasions, if a Rajah cannot attend the wedding, he can send his sword to represent him!

After this marriage the little Rani was happy for a short time, but when the possibility of an heir was announced "the green-eyed monster" settled in the palace, and things became very difficult for the little woman. One can picture the loneliness and sorrow which jealousy produces when it steps into a household and separates a woman from her husband in all but name. Gold cannot hide the tragedy of such lives, nor can social position compensate for this loss. This is

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true the world over, and when there is no relief from the thought of sorrow by preoccupation with a daily round of duties, no knowledge of the only source of consolation, it creates a condition which is almost hopeless.

The little heir is a fine child, and fortunately the people who immediately surround him are devoted to his welfare.

It is with greater pleasure that I record my impressions of the Dewan or prime minister of the State, one of the finest men I have ever met. He is courteous, frank, truthful, earnest, kind. Though living in a hotbed of superstition he is untrammelled by it, unhurt by the immoralities of palace life, pure in heart and action. On him devolved the care of my entertainment at the palace, and he spared no pains to make me comfortable.

I had several talks with him about his country, for which he has a deep and genuine love. He is adored by the Rajah's subjects, many of whom have to thank him for his gracious pleading for them when overtaken by unmeritedly severe punishments for trivial faults. He is the nephew of the Rajah, but he makes no attempt to assume the "pouting chest" which is affected by men of position in India. He walked in and out among

## THE SECOND RANI, THE HEIR AND THE DEWAN.

the people as though he were one of themselves, and they were not afraid to bring their cares to him. I coveted such a man for the kingdom of God, and he listened earnestly when I told him about God, the Bible, the great Saviour King.

His family are fine people. The mother, an orthodox Hindu, told me how in a serious difficulty she had spent days and nights before the gods, but the only reply she received was an impression that she must suffer her troubles bravely. Their home is pure, no prostitutes are allowed, and the Dewan refuses to have anything to do with the hateful custom of initiating luck for rich temple girls by receiving their first favours. In Calcutta I saw again on a closer acquaintance with the man that he was what the people described him to be—pure.

In my discussions with him I gathered that his sense of justice had been sharpened, his purity strengthened, and his desire for right-doing intensified by an impartial and prolonged study of the Truth.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DAYS OF PREPARATION.

THE Rajah rented a fine house in Calcutta, and the upper story was arranged as the women's quarters. I lived outside. The house, though palatial and fitted with the best electrical arrangements, was indescribably dirty. The electric fans and lights were a great novelty to the Rajah's people; they had all the fans going together, and when no one was looking, turned on the lights during the day for amusement. This happened, however, only until the first bill came in, when the fear of the meter absorbed the desire for illumination and air.

Unknown to me the Rani had on arrival in Calcutta bathed in the sacred river, Ganges, and performed such ceremonies as were essential to her at the famous "Kali" temple in a suburb of Calcutta, the temple of the goddess of destruction, the wife of Siva. Not all the dirt of the river, nor the muddy colour of the stream, nor its evident pollution from the shipping in the river,

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makes any difference to the people's imagination regarding the sacredness of its waters ; it is the *Ganges* in which the gods of old had bathed, therefore it was pure ; they had initiated a ritual in ablution and purification which nothing could annul. The water laid on in the taps for the houses was *Ganges* water purified, but it was not good enough for sacred purposes, so the poor household priest walked wearily on several occasions to the riverside to obtain this dirty water, while pure water was at hand. India prefers dirt to cleanliness where sentiment is concerned, and darkness to light when hoary traditions are involved.

The Rani was very anxious to see the sights of Calcutta. Though a zenana woman she determined to drive about in motor-cars and see everything. Indeed, it was a heavy round of sight-seeing, for the weather was intensely hot, and how she endured it all for so many hours together was wonderful. The famous Zoo was visited. I had hoped that she would wear a heavier cloth for walking about in public, but, alas ! the same diaphonous clothes were donned, and in addition a pair of stockings that were innocent of suspenders, together with a pair of deck shoes. I blushed several times while in the Zoo at the spectacle of

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it all, for not even my huge proportions could shelter her from public gaze. She went all round the gardens and thoroughly enjoyed everything, even to the drink of lemonade and ice at the end of the drive. Then we drove round the main streets. The Rajah asked me what one of the most brilliantly lighted places on Chowringhee was, and I said, "The road to hell." He visited the Gaiety Theatre several times, and described the women there as being undressed and vulgar! Such was his Indian interpretation of evening dress! When the Rani wished me to go to a *matinée* with her, I refused, and he said that my mind was too pure for them to expect me to go to any of these places, thereby putting a premium on a Christian life and depreciating the world and its pleasures. The Museum was visited the next day, and some of the parks. The Rani loved the motor rides, for her usual mode of locomotion is a palanquin, and the swiftness of the cars gave her a childlike delight.

One evening I took her to see the doctor who had promised to perform the operation, and then at last it was decided that the Rani should pass under the power of the knife to regain health and strength.

She was brave and cheerful over the decision,

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calmly accepted the inevitable, and spent the next day in settling her affairs and writing her farewell letters to her people. She rejoiced that she was in Calcutta and near the Ganges, so that if she perished her ashes would be cast into the sacred river and so secure her immunity from re-births. She also told me that the Rajah was old and she could not bear the thought of being shorn of her glory as a widow, so that death, even if it came, would see her pass out of the world with glory. A woman who dies in the lifetime of her husband goes at once to bliss, where she enjoys much blessedness and receives a crown.

In due course the surgeon of one of the local hospitals came over to see the house and to choose her operation room. She was a Medical Missionary of a well-known Mission in India, and is doing splendid work now in a Government hospital. At last a little room was chosen, and then began the awful task of getting the place clean and fit for the big work before us. I do not know how to describe my position in the palace, but when it is remembered that the Rani called me "Mother" it explains the confidence they had in entrusting me with many responsible offices, even to the banking of their money in my name (which I politely refused to undertake). The work committed to

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me as House Surgeon, General Manager, Interpreter and Guide was an honour conferred on me as a manifestation of their affection and confidence, for when a place of affection is secured in the heart of India's people, their contribution of loyalty and confidence is prodigal. I viewed it all as an opportunity for the Kingdom of God, and strove to bend every occasion towards eternal issues.

Perhaps the most difficult work of all was to keep the Rajah's mind calm, and this was a very onerous task indeed. Times out of number the motor-car would call for me, just to have me explain some point in the treatment which he could not possibly understand, and to assure him that the Rani was receiving the greatest care. Day and night were not in his calculation when he wanted a query answered, perhaps one that had been answered a dozen times before. It was a lesson in patience, diplomacy and courage which one can never forget. Our fees were paid beforehand, whether from a superstitious fear or from the dread of thieves, I do not know.

Then began the scrubbing of the rooms—the operation room, the marbled-floor centre room with its horribly dirty doors and walls, and the anteroom for nurses' appliances. It took three solid days of work. Ordinary coolies were em-

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ployed, but they had no idea of cleaning a window. Two little boys on perilous pieces of bamboo tied together with very insufficient rope tried to sweep the roof and walls clean and whitewash them with lime. The floors were the worst of all, for the dirt of a century seemed to be encrusted on them. Staying at the house where I was boarding was a lady missionary, and but for her help I fear that I should never have got through in time. We organized our parties for the work : she was in command of the coolies, and I had to induce the palace servants to become a corps ; but people more unwilling to recruit I never saw. They thought that the work of scrubbing windows and cleaning floors was derogatory to their dignity. Not all the best tales I could tell them of the dignity of labour would move them. The Rajah in his restless way came up and down once or twice, muttered an incoherent something, and moved off, but this made no impression on anyone.

At last, because we could not afford to lose any more time and the rooms had to be prepared, we both took scrubs in our hands and proved the dignity of labour by beginning the work. Then the Dewan felt so ashamed that he set to, and his men, seeing his spirit, fell into line ; the coolies, too, caught the infection of working amiably, and

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we all went at it, each of us commanding our own department and so seeing that things were done thoroughly. The house had never had such a cleaning up since it was built.

After the cleaning and the whitewashing with lime, the electricians had to come in and attend to the lamps and fans ; and after that the final fitting up of the operation room floor with linoleum, and the windows with curtains, all took time. The Rajah was very much impressed with the thoroughness of it all and with the fact that we were not above menial service when it was necessary to do it. The extensive cleaning arrangements also gave him some impression of the seriousness of the operation to be performed.

So all the rooms were cleaned and prepared, the hired furniture scrubbed in the same fashion and put into place, and the general settling in for the operation completed.

## CHAPTER V.

### A WOMAN'S SACRIFICE FOR HER HUSBAND.

THE Rani took no notice of all the cleaning that was going on. We tried to get her to take special nourishment and drugs to strengthen her for the operation, but, alas ! our persuasions failed. She received the medicines indeed, but she threw them out of the window !

Two days before the operation happened to be a fast day, a specially important ceremony by which a woman could secure to her husband prolongation of life ; and, even with all the probability of death before her, this woman did not diminish one single item of normal ritual or custom. We all dreaded much the long fast of twenty-four hours, without a drop of water, but to her it was essential that she should prolong the Rajah's life by her abstinence, even if it lessened her chances at the operation.

Another way of prolonging the husband's life is by using turmeric water. The Rani used it much. This gives a ghastly death-like hue to the

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face, and anyone who touches the saffroned person suffers dreadfully with yellow stains on hands and clothing. The saffron is used to distinguish married women from widows. It gives the body a yellow or gold colour, and is supposed to be beneficial in other ways, chiefly to keep the body cool. A woman who dies during the lifetime of her husband is also bathed in turmeric solution to show that she is a worthy person.

The Rajah went to her frequently, pleaded with her, and excused her on the ground of his advanced age, but she was obdurate. Again and again he walked round her bed, stroked her, invoked blessings on her country, her people, her near relatives, if she would only give up this puja, but she would not.

In the afternoon she went through an elaborate ceremonial, connected with her fasting, to the goddess "Suthi Sabatri," who is the sister-in-law of Jagganath, and the worship of whom, because she was the pure wife of one husband, a god, would give length of days to the husband of the worshipper. This ceremony is usually performed in the month of May, on the darkest day of the month, and is called the "Mango dark night" because it is the season of mango fruit, or the "Kanchi dark night" because it has to do with women who wear glass bangles, that is, women

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whose husbands are alive. The household priest, with the symbol of his deity marked on his forehead in perpendicular lines of white powder, and smeared with sandalwood paste on arms and chest, performed the ceremony, which I was able to witness.

He drew on the marble floor a kind of mathematical figure in chalk, with various ramifications, and in it put all the accessories of worship—cocoanuts at the four corners, a vessel of incense, strongly scented stale yellow flowers, a brass vessel of water, mangoes, once in their beauty but now shrivelled up, a piece of cloth. In the centre was the goddess Sabatri, on a brass salver, the figure so small that whether it was made of brass or silver I could not tell; the household stone god was by the side, with the sacred papyrus (usually a date-palm leaf) with its ritual for the ceremony, and the punctuating brass bell.

The Rani sat behind the door to hear the ritual through, and she did not consider it an interruption to talk to me or give commands to the servants during the ceremony. The priest also stopped in the middle of the service and answered my questions. He was a fine man, simple, unaffected, with no Brahminical bombast. He was much affected by my calling him "brother" every time

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I addressed him on the subject of Christianity. In the middle of this puja we digressed into a discussion of the futility of all this worship and the necessity for a Saviour ; and he finally admitted that he was doing the work for the money he got, and " a Brahmin had to live " ! Then, turning from us, he went on ringing the bell at various intervals, sprinkling water, burning incense, reciting liturgies, and so droning out a worship to a lifeless god smaller than his hand ! The fruit, flowers, cloth are the priest's portion when the worship is finished.

The priest will figure much in this record. He had promised from the time of the operation to carry out all the Rani's vows of fasting, which were many, and also to perform certain others on behalf of her welfare, so that altogether, with his many days of fasting, he looked fairly attenuated when his task was over. Twice a day he went through the daily ceremonies for the Rajah as well.

I once asked what he got for all this rigorous service, and was told that his payment was ten rupees a month and the perquisites of worship !

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE TRIUMPH OF SURGERY.

ON the night of the ceremony just described, when making my last round, I discovered to my horror that the Rani was sleeping on the cold marble floor, recently washed and still damp. So exhausted was she over the puja and the fasting that she lay as one dead, and it took some time to rouse her. This will give an idea of how little the people know of the ordinary rules of hygiene or the care of the body.

Two Indian nurses were engaged ; they arrived the day before the operation to go through the elaborate ritual of sterilizing, and the other preparations for the operation. I found them very well trained, for their training at the Dufferin Hospital was as good as that given to any European nurse. I had a long talk with the Rani the night before the operation. She kept calm, she was quite prepared for whatever was before her, but no word of truth penetrated her mind.

The Rajah seemed strangely nervous of seeing

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her. His anxiety took the form of unreasonableness about everything, and this naturally made matters ever so much more difficult. The women servants were sent downstairs, not to come up again for many weeks. They are adepts at diplomacy and exalt every whim of their queen's into an occasion for giving fulsome flattery. Of dirt they know much, of mischief making more, and, as for their morals, the less said about them the better. Frequently they crept up by the back staircase, only to make mischief hither and thither.

The Rani slept as quietly that night as if the morrow were to be an ordinary day. The operation was fixed for the early morning, and the hustling and arranging began at dawn.

The men of the palace had quite lost their nerve, for on the last occasion of my running up the staircase on an important errand the Rajah called me again to ask whether his beloved's life would be in danger. I promised that he should see her if he would restrain his tears. Poor old man, he walked up just before the anæsthetist began to give the chloroform ; it was a pathetic farewell, for she said nothing of comfort or good-bye: he walked round the bed once or twice looking very hopeless, and touching her on the shoulder began to sob. Then I had to lead him out of the room.

## THE TRIUMPH OF SURGERY.

There were seven of us, doctors and nurses, in the theatre. The room was 15 feet by 15 feet and the temperature 90 degrees. The electric fan failed at the last minute, so we had to give ourselves up to work amidst heat and perspiration. The operation was a difficult one, and made worse by the status of the patient and her weakened condition. Someone had to be reporting the progress of the case to the anxious Dewan and lawyer, who were seated in the front verandah of the upper floor, and immediately they would send to the Rajah.

When the enormous tumour was removed, as the Rajah was anxious to see it I took it to the two men in the verandah ; they shuddered, and I thought were going to faint ; and when the Rajah saw it he ran away, calling it a devil ! Every time he looked it struck terror into him, and again and again he would ask for a recital of the mode of operation. He commented much on Western skill in surgery, its cleanliness, its thoroughness, its brave invasions into regions of danger to preserve life, and the resources of medicine and nursing which make for an early convalescence. He must have contrasted our Western with the Eastern methods of surgery, in which cleanliness and nursing are negligible quantities and the instruments are rude and dirty.

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The evening previous to the operation the Rajah had purchased a large jar for the tumour, and on one of my visits asked me if it was large enough. On my replying in the negative he purchased a larger one, and after the tumour had been touched, examined, commented on by the whole palace, it was put into the glass jar for preservation ! It was a great wonder to them all, and the talk about it was highly amusing.

On the whole, the Rani stood the operation well, but she was not strong. All day long she was very low, and we were all sufficiently anxious ; but it is impossible to describe the state of the Rajah's nerves and the condition of his people. It fell to my lot to answer all their queries, allay all their fears, persuade them to take food, and generally bring some calm out of the storm of anxiety. I stayed in the palace the night after the operation, and then at last the worn-out nerves of the inhabitants succumbed to slumber. We were left in undisturbed possession of the upper floor, except that men-servants, sent up to be ready to carry messages, had fallen asleep on steps and landings, and so provided obstacles and hurdles for the poor unfortunates who had to go up and down the stairs during the night.

## CHAPTER VII.

### AN INDIAN PRINCESS, HER LORD AND HER MOODS.

THE next morning the Rani, though still low, was fully alive to her duties, for she said that she would have no nourishment till she had drunk the "Pa-pani." I wondered what this could be. A silver cup with clean-looking water was brought to her ; she dipped her finger into the cup, touched her head with the water and then drank a little of it. When I asked her to explain, she seemed reluctant to do so, but at last someone standing by said that it was the water in which the Rajah had washed his feet that morning, and she had to drink it daily to show that he was her lord and god ! The marital god is a real divinity, though he has only one worshipper ; the wife must renounce all other gods if they oppose the husband-god. I could not believe that so ghastly a custom existed or that the imagination could think of so disgusting a symbol of submission.

The Rani told me of it herself later, and morning

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after morning that little silver cup came up, and she went through the same sacramental performance of puja worship to her husband. The water was, fortunately, relatively clean : she told me that it was collected after the feet had been previously washed ; but relativity of cleanliness does not render the thought less abhorrent. I told her that no Englishwoman would do that to save her life !

Ignorance for women has been the policy of Hinduism. But did the Rani really feel submissive ? She was a veritable Cleopatra, and a slave only in name ; in reality the Rajah had that abject place, for he simply followed out all her commands. According to the etiquette of their lives, the Rajah could not come into the Rani's presence unless she had previously requested it ; so very often, when of his own accord, because of his anxiety for her, he would come to see her, she would utterly ignore his presence. He would go round and round her bed, addressing her, invoking blessings on her, and even attempting to stroke her ; and when she could endure it no longer she would imperiously utter the one word " Go," pointing with her delicate finger to the door. She seemed to delight in testing his affection and in exhibiting her authority over him. I expostulated with her on two or three occasions

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and reminded her of his devotion ; but her proud reply was, " He has no business to visit me when I have not sent for him."

Of what use the " Pa-pani " farce when the reality was the exaggerated opposite ! Surely the Rajah would have had much sympathy with a poet of this country who in the seventh century wrote thus of women :

Who made this monstrous combination,  
This whirlpool of doubt's gyration,  
This home of wrong and town of terrors,  
This garden of tricks and store of errors,  
This bar that shuts the gates supernal,  
This entrance to the door infernal,  
This basket full of delusion,  
This poison—honey's dreadful fusion,  
This snare which catches every human,  
This strange machine—who, pray, made woman ?

Our patient, however, made progress daily, though with many ups and downs. She demanded endless attention ; the doctors, the nurses, all had to remember her dignity and accord her due regard. I noticed on two or three occasions that she was offended when I spent time in speaking to others in the room ; she was a bundle of individualism, with its attendant satellites, monopoly and exaction ! She never lost sight of her dignity, she even dreamt of it, and woke up to demand more honour than ever ; and yet there was some-

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thing about her, perhaps her weakness, perhaps her feminine whimsicalities, which appealed to us and made us desire to satisfy her demands. She could be very charming even as an invalid.

The greatest trouble was with her diet. She was a woman of many fastings, and her average in food was poor. Her weakness demanded much nourishment, and of a kind she was not accustomed to. The memory of the persuasions, commands and annoyances of her food hours is still with me. She would keep the nurses standing an hour by her bedside with a cup of Benger's food. She often kept me waiting in the same way. We pleaded, expostulated, scolded on this score dozens of times, but frequently with no result.

The motor came for me at all sorts of odd hours, day and night, over this food question. One night a crisis seemed to have been reached, and I was whirled along to the Rajah's, wondering what dreadful thing had happened, for the message was to "come quickly." When I arrived I found it was the food question over again. The Rani was in a rage, courtesy and grace gone and just ill-temper personified, ready for a harangue. It was poured forth at a temperature of about 200°. Oh, the stupidity of my arrangement for nurses, the unreasonableness of my commands, and my

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non-appreciation of the fact that her digestive apparatus was not an ordinary one, not from the point of view of anatomy, but because it belonged to an aristocrat ! (This was the first time for me to hear of differentiation in the anatomical and physiological realm for reasons of caste !) Did I think a princess could gorge like ordinary mortals ? If so, she was there to tell me that my opinions were all astray. The only reply she got was to have a cup of milk brought her to drink, as she had not taken anything for hours !

On another night, when the motor-car arrived with a breathless message to come at once, it proved to have no deeper reason than a request from the Rani to bring a bed in and sleep beside her, as she was feeling so low and depressed. Or, if I could not do that, would I please sit by her and stroke her hand to comfort her ! To be aroused from slumber just to do this seemed absurd, yet it all came into that long list of wearying experiences which aggregated an imperfect endeavour to make the truth of God a reality to her. There must have been something magnetic in my stroking, perhaps the warmth of a little annoyance behind it, which charmed her to sleep, for she was soon oblivious to my presence, and I got back to bed as soon as I could.

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Frequently the Rani, during the ordinary visits, asked to be stroked. She evidently missed the incessant massage her servants gave her.

Once during her illness her brother, the Rajah of a neighbouring small State, arrived with his small retinue, a household priest and a few servants. The Rani was not told of his presence until the day before he left. I suggested he should not go away before seeing her, but discovered that there was no "seeing" in the case, for this Rani may not see her own brothers. When she leaves her mother's house she practically leaves it for ever, unless she has a husband who has been influenced by modern teaching. She leaves her mother's house to go out into the unknown practically. An occasional letter recording domestic occurrences and a few gifts may bridge the distance, but no other communication is permitted. The brother came upstairs, stood behind a screen placed near the Rani, and spoke to her in a soft, unemotional voice in utter commonplaces for about five minutes. There seemed to be no pleasure in it to him, and she scarcely replied.

During this time the rest of the household, including its master, were enjoying the new experiences of life in the capital. His State being so remote from everything and everywhere, the

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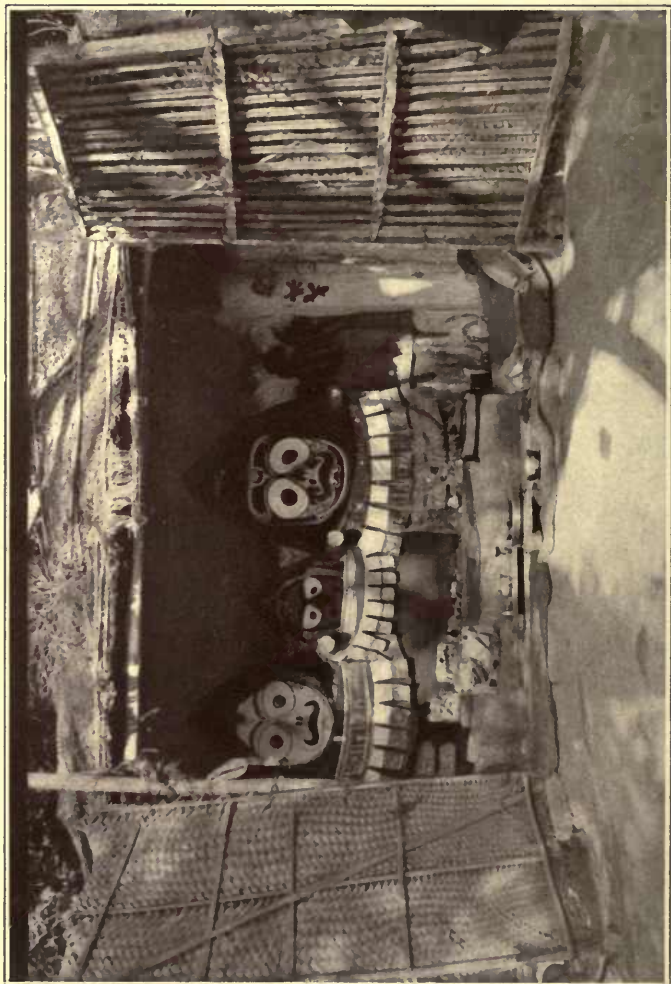
interests of such a large city as Calcutta were much to the Rajah. The municipal market in the city was visited by the palace people daily, and each day they brought home extraordinary things, which they exhibited to me with great delight, for by this time I had become a "Mother," to the whole palace. Then the Rajah was anxious to see everything, so many afternoons had to be given over to sight-seeing. We visited Government House and saw its beautiful buildings and grounds, but he did not think this wonderfully palatial residence any better than his modest brick house! We visited the Mint and the Botanical Gardens, the Fort and the Dufferin Hospital. For the visit the doctor naïvely told him that when he called he must put on his royal robes, or the people wouldn't know his status—a very necessary hint, as his dress of ease in the palace frequently began at his waist. The donning of his special royal robes usually took place in the portico, or the front verandah, or standing near the waiting taxi, so that one had to be prepared for unwelcome visions on entering the grounds. No wonder the Ranis are "purdah." There is much to shock one's modesty in a palace.

One visit was paid to the Marwari temple, which is a gorgeous example of Eastern temple

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art. The grounds are well laid out ; the tanks are gorged with fish, as people are not allowed to catch the fish in them and centuries of multiplication have increased the number of them prodigiously. The Alipore Jail, which is built on modern lines, was also visited, and here the Dewan, who was always practical, garnered several hints for his little jail in the home State.





THE JAGGANATH IMAGES, PURI: THE GOD, HIS SISTER AND HIS BROTHER.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A PRINCE AND HIS RELIGION.

EVERY morning before partaking of the principal meal the Rajah went through his puja. The priest drew on the ground the mathematical figures in chalk, one for himself, another for the Rajah. Within these sacred enclosures of chalk the Rajah and priest had their accessories of worship, gods, pots, pans, incense, flowers, etc., and as the priest droned out the liturgies he and the Rajah, each in his small square, went through the water sprinkling, bell ringing, incense lighting, simultaneously. Neither of them objected to spectators ; in fact, they welcomed them. The Rajah sat on the floor, tailor-fashion, to perform the puja, with only a loin cloth on. Day after day the droning of the priest could be heard, crying to gods that are no gods, and yet believing he was heard.

Behind all these external incongruities of Hinduism, and behind the phenomena of idolatry, are great controlling ideas, and these are the ones

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we must grasp if we are to deal with the Hindu faith, and not merely with the external symbols of their worship. When we understand these and know how inadequate they are for the soul's salvation, how distorted they are in regard to the truth, and how subversive of the highest ethical teaching, we realize how great is India's need and how great our responsibility in supplying the remedy.

A poet of India in the 7th century wrote thus :

Thou descendest to hell, thou ascendest to heaven,  
Hither and thither thou rulest, O heart,  
Unstable, uncertain, in courses uneven,  
What will'st thou ? That bliss which thou seekest apart  
Is God's ; God is thine. From all else then cease,  
For only in God the heart findeth peace.

In this esoteric utterance one finds faith in the right attitude ; but it is defective in objective, for this god described in the poem " is the essence of life, but does not himself live ; he is the principle of intelligence, but does not know himself ; he is the sum of bliss, but cannot rejoice."

" There are seven periods in India's search for the true God : first there was the creative period, expressed in the Vedas, as the people, in hymns and songs, broke forth in praise of the god of nature ; then came the sacrificial period of ceremonial worship ; then the great philosophic period

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of the Upanishads, followed by the scholastic period formulating the law code of Manu and Caste ; then came the great humanitarian revolt under Buddha, and later the incarnation period, when India sought to draw near to herself the comforting belief in personal gods, with the doctrine of attachment to those gods. Now we have reached the seventh period in India's quest for a true god. It is the period of fulfilment."

After the ceremony, the meal was dedicated and a portion of it sent up to the Rani ; but the first day the food was left untouched, as my " evil eye " had been on it. Unfortunately I was standing near the Rani and had looked at the food to see if it was adequate for her needs. Anyone of a lower or another caste looking at the food of a person casts the " evil eye," and this would produce colic, indigestion and various other ills if the food were partaken of. I was ever after strictly excluded from the room when rice was taken up to the Rani ; I asked the Rani how I, her mother, could cast an " evil eye " on her daughter, but she said that caste did not recognise adopted titles, and it made no exceptions in its exclusiveness.

The Rajah was naturally a sharer in this caste feeling. Indeed, caste and creed are so intermingled in the habits and worship of the people

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that it is difficult to think of them apart : they are convertible terms. A man's caste decides his creed : he must follow in the footsteps of his ancestors, "the way his fathers trod," however unreasonable and obsolete the thoughts and demands of the creed.

"India has consistently declined to recognize any distinction between the social and religious life. These are the reverse and obverse of life : they are under the same rules and authority. Religion permeates the whole social domain, and social order draws its sanctions from it. The caste system obtrudes itself on all sides. It is founded by the authority of heaven, penetrating every department, entering into every detail of life, and enforced by strictly religious penalties. Caste is more social than religious, but it does not exist outside of its religion. There are 886 Brahmin castes alone."

Caste was unknown in the ancient Vedic times, when society was more elastic and free, although even then there was a tendency towards mechanical division. But for twenty-five centuries it has controlled the life of nearly one-sixth of the human race. Whether its origin was religious, tribal, social or occupational matters little : it now dictates every detail of human relationship among Hindus and

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controls the whole destiny of India. To violate one of the commands which Manu, twenty-five centuries ago, crystallized into a system of laws, and which became an integral part of recognized Hindu law, is to be severely punished, by boycott, or the loss of caste, loss of servants, and domestic isolation and expulsion. The greatest violations of these laws are a change of faith (which is punished by absolute exclusion), marrying a widow, travel, beef-eating, officiating as priests to out-castes, marrying outside of one's caste.

All these beliefs the Rajah has, for is he not a Kshatriya, which is the royal and warlike caste, second to the Brahmin, supposed to have emanated from Brahma's (the initial god of the Hindus) shoulders? Even in the palace one frequently saw the results of the caste system, its alienation, its narrowed sympathies, its opposition to broadening views and tolerance, its degradation of manual labour. We know, too, how caste sets man against man, opposes commerce and delays the success of nations; it is unethical, unreasonable, inhuman; it has some possibilities for good, but, weighed in the balances by the results to the general good, it is overwhelmingly wanting, and cannot be considered as a social measure of any value.

The Rani discussed caste with me fully one day,

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but I failed to convince her of its futility ; in one discussion we referred to the British occupation of India and the changes it had brought about in caste. I told her that the safety of a foreign rule in India depended on caste, for it separated the peoples so much that they could not be of one mind, even in regaining their own country. I also said that when India accepted Christ it would be one people under one supreme control, and that then possibly God would trust it with autonomy ; but till then He would let foreigners stay in India, to keep the " balance of power " between varying castes, creeds, sects and divisions of peoples, who could never coalesce without an internal, spiritual, unifying incentive.

The Rajah is a great opium smoker. Little balls of opium made up with burnt guava leaves formed his principal smoke with the hookah. This he mostly smoked during the day, and mid-day was the worst time for endeavouring to make an intelligent thought enter his mind. While he smoked this and the medicated vapour passed through its aqueous medium in the " hubble-bubble " to his stomach and lungs, its soporific effect was increased by the reading to him of the sacred Bhagavad Gita and other sacred books. The Gita is of all ancient Brahminical writings the

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most cherished by all Hindus. There is no book that wields a larger influence in the life of India than this, which has been called by some the Hindu Bible. It is a small book, smaller than the Gospel of Mark, and belongs to the second or third century of our era.

The man who read, probably the priest, intoned loudly enough for us to hear him on the upper floor, and the voice ended in descendo as the royal sleeper fell into profound slumber. The Rajah seemed to like droning voices, for in the afternoon he got the Household Treasurer to give a recital of the expenses of the previous day. During one of these occasions all three doctors visited the palace, and their interpretations of his mood was—"as a roaring lion" to Dr. W——, "he took no notice of me" to Dr. C——, who was treating his eyes at the time, and to me he was captious. Opium and accounts together always made less than a man of him, and sometimes till he did not know what he was saying or doing.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE GODS OF THE PEOPLE.

THERE are more gods in India than there are people. "Ten centuries ago the gods numbered 330 millions, in addition to the acknowledged host of well-known Hindu deities ; every family has its gods and every village its protecting demons ; and when trees, rivers, mountains and a thousand other objects represent to the popular mind separate godlets, it will be seen that India has gone mad in its passion for populating the world with gods."

Whether all gods, even spirit gods, are only personified natural phenomena or not, it is certain that they have innumerable worshippers. Different castes have varying regard for special deities, but there are millions of gods common to all Hindus. The lower castes think more of the *gods of phenomena* than others. The representations of these gods, in earth, stone or metal, are neither beautiful nor pure. To look at some of them is suggestive of anything but chaste and

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elevating thoughts. The temples, of which there are many in India, have numberless obscene picturings on the inner and outer walls.

Sun, moon, stars, swords (as in the case of Rajahs), and mountains are all in the pantheon. The worship going on to-day, as I write, of paddy (the rice grain), symbolised as Lakhmi, the goddess of plenty, is a part of the worship of phenomena. The ryot or peasant prays to mountains, rivers, corn, thinking they are interested in his welfare. The sun is worshipped in many districts as the soul of a dead Rajah! Even a stone becomes a god when set up by a priest! Then there are the *gods of imagination*, spirits malevolent or benevolent, which aid or injure man. Under this head would be included fairies, ghosts, demons. What a large part these play in the life of a Hindu! A mystic circle representing some demoniacal power drawn round a person is supposed to wield a certain authority. I have seen people draw it round a woman fetching water from a well or tank, and the woman, because of her belief in imaginative gods, stops spellbound till the spell is broken by an incantation pronounced by another.

There are hundreds of people who earn their daily bread by driving out devils, so frequently do people become possessed. The only days for

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these incantations are Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Saturday. I have frequently been reprov'd for walking about alone in the dark, lest these malevolent creatures should seize me! The first set of gods might be described as utilitarian, the second are due to fear. Then there are *human gods*—the household priest, wizards and witches. Horrible-looking creatures the witches are, too, with their dirty, unkempt hair, and other accessories of their trade. In olden times anyone might be a wizard, but the prerogative is now in the hands of priests. His incantations secure victory or defeat in battle. He can antidote every evil magic and create fresh magic of his own. It was by means of this power that the priests slowly "arrogated divinity to themselves."

The witches are for occasional obsession, especially in times of epidemics, for purposes of prognostication and remedy. One day a witch in this town, after incantations, told a woman who had come to consult her that she would have a son, but in order that the charm should work she must walk home looking straight before her. The victim was not warned that there was a well in the compound, so she walked straight before her into the well, which had no protecting wall, and was drowned! Is not this worship directed

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by fear? Then there are *hero-gods*, such as Buddha, Rama, Krishna and local chieftains, for a shrine and offerings are enough to establish a god. Then there are *animal* gods, such as snakes and monkeys. A cobra is supposed to uphold the world, and the tiger claw is a mighty talismanic god. There is a vast antithesis between faith and works, and between purity and ethics, in the religion of this people.

But of the true God there is no word. Fear, utility, admiration, these have no power to move the soul or save it. But conscience has not much place in the religious teaching of the Hindus, for they accept naturally contradictory teachings and are not troubled by logical inconsistencies. In these facts we see India's deep need of a living God and a loving Redeemer.

The Rajah's chief god is Durga. Among the Hindus lotus flowers are offered to the goddess Durga, and in Indian mythology the origin of the custom is as follows: A certain prince, Ram Chandro, voluntarily fulfilled a vow to go into exile, made by his father to a jealous step-mother. His wife Sita and his brother Lakshmun joined him. While sheltering in the forests Sita was carried off by Ravan, King of Rakhasas, who was ravished with her beauty. Her husband, despairing of

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finding her, invoked the aid of Hanuman, the king of the monkeys. This was readily granted, and the monkeys fought Ravan, who, though beaten, managed to escape, leaving behind his slain sons, grandsons and kinsmen. The goddess Durga helped Ravan to make good his escape, but until he was killed Sita could not be rescued.

Repeated application on the part of Hanuman to have Sita restored having failed, he resorted to a lake at Mansorabar, and, bringing home from thence one hundred and eight lotuses, laid them with much reverence in front of the shrine of Durga. Still the goddess remained obdurate, refusing to release Sita. Rama then discovered that yet another flower was wanting, so Hanuman set forth once more to the lake, but failed to obtain a single lotus blossom.

Durga then, to test the strength of Rama's devotion, caused one flower to remain invisible, and the husband, in despair, offered the goddess one of his eyes, as they were said to resemble lotuses. When he was in the act of sacrificing his eye, Durga, touched by his devotion, appeared before him, stopped the sacrifice, and gave Rama a bow and arrows to slay Ravan with. In this task Rama was successful, and so recovered his wife.

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This legend has given rise to the Hindoo festival called Bijoya, which is celebrated on the day on which Ravan was slain. Doubtless it was the means of evoking the frequent expression used by Hindus when describing female beauty as "lotus eyed" or "eyes as tender as a lotus." Frequent allusions to this are found in Indian poetry.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE STOLEN GOD.

THE Rajah decided that he would like to visit a place of pilgrimage near Calcutta. Almost every year he visits Puri, and he has also taken extensive pilgrimages to other places. The priest of the temple in this pilgrimage, whom I saw, was a man who did not feel it demeaning to beg the Rajah on more than one occasion at Calcutta to visit the shrine. The Rajah finally decided to go, and accordingly he, his god and the priest and retinue started out by train to the place.

The god, which is absolutely essential to their worship, and which finds a place in all their pujas, is a small stone which can be held in one's hand. It is called the "Salagrama," and is adopted as a representation of Vishnu, Jagganath or Siva. Vishnu, the Divine Pervader, infuses his essence for special purposes into created things, and this stone is one of them. It is a fossil ammonite blackstone found in certain rivers, and is worshipped by Brahmins, the princely and a few other

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high caste peoples. All Brahmins of the priestly class keep this stone in their houses, but only those castes keep a Salagrama who can pay for the services of a Brahmin priest to perform the ceremonies of the stone.

At the memorial funeral ceremonies, at which at least three Brahmins have to be present to represent Vishnu, the Devatas and the deceased ancestors, it is permissible to allow Vishnu to be represented by a Salagrama stone when one of the Brahmins is absent. This tutelar god has his niche or shrine, to which daily worship is rendered by the household priest. The Salagrama is sometimes lodged in a tree during some months, for public worship by those who take the vow of perpetual cleanliness for salvation. It is also used, incidentally, to detect thieves. The priest who is the detective uses its weight in raw rice to give to all the people he suspects, and the one who does not masticate the rice is the culprit.\*

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\* THE SALAGRAMA.—By the worshippers of Vishnu the Salagrama stone is regarded as a most sacred object. Images and idols of the gods have to be consecrated in a special ceremony by a Brahman priest before they can be used, but this stone is inherently sacred, and is worshipped as a part of the deity himself. It is a round black ammonite, and is found in Mount Gandaki, in Nepal. Ward says that popular belief is that insects perforated the masses of stone, so that they fall into the River Gandaki and are taken out by means of nets. Common ones are about the size of a watch, and they are valued according to their size, hollowness, and inside colouring. For rarer kinds as much as Rs. 2,000 are given. Hindus have a notion that whoever keeps this celebrated stone in his house can

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The Salagrama is essentially a god for male worship. The worship of any god may be performed before it, but not that of any female deity! The women's god is Lakhmi, the wife of Jagganath, the goddess of plenty: she is represented in all Hindu homes, and is worshipped by the women in the months of harvest, on Thursdays.

The priest was in charge of the Rajah's box containing the Salagrama and the other accessories of worship. They started out gaily, hoping by this pilgrimage to lessen their rebirths and to secure "merit." On the journey there was a junc-

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never become poor, but that on the very day in which anyone parts with one of them he will begin to sink into poverty.

The Brahmans usually worship this form of Vishnu in their homes. They first bathe or wash the stone, reading the formulas, and then offer flowers, incense, light sweetmeats, and water, repeating incantations. After worship the offerings are eaten by the family.

In the hot months, to cool the sacred stone, a vessel is suspended over it, as in the case of the Linga of Siva, and a small hole is bored in the bottom and water poured into the vessel. The water which drips over the stone is carefully collected, and no orthodox Brahman in Western India will eat his food until he has thrice sipped it. The marks of the stone are shown to dying men, in the belief that the concentration of the mind on this object will ensure the soul a safe passage to Vishnu's heaven.—*The Gods of India* (Dr. E. H. Martin).

The reason why this stone is so sacred is given in the Bhagavata Purana: "Vishnu created nine planets to preside over the fates of men. Sani (the planet Saturn) commenced his reign by requesting Brahma to become subject to him for twelve years. Brahma referred him to Vishnu, who asked him to call on him next day. When he called he found that the god, dreading the influence of the inauspicious planet, had transformed himself into a mountain. Sani then became a worm, and ate into the vitals of the mountain for twelve years. At the expiration of that time Vishnu resumed his proper shape, and ordered that henceforth the stones of this mountain (Gandaki) should be worshipped as the representatives of himself."—*Hindu Mythology* (Wilkins).

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tion where they had to change trains. During the time of waiting they all slumbered and slept, even the household god apparently, for they are supposed to have their sleeping hours ; and when they went to catch their train the god-box was missing ! The god had been stolen !

It was a catastrophe indeed. Hither and thither they searched along the platform, but the Salagrama was certainly gone. The Rajah, however, decided to go on, as he could still find a Brahmin priest to loan him a god to administer to his religious necessities at the forthcoming ceremony : but the priest—— ?

When I visited the palace in the evening there was the priest, pale, black-eyed, exhausted, dejected, and the palace ringing with the awful news that the god had been stolen. I called for the priest, and in tones of great sorrow and dismay he began to relate the dismal story.

“ Why didn’t you go on with the Rajah ? ” I asked.

“ How could I ? ” he replied, “ my god was gone, there was no more work for me to do, no god to worship.”

I could have wept to think of this man’s ignorance. It was an excellent opportunity for a long serious talk with him, and for half an hour he

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listened ; he even acknowledged that, if his god could not protect itself, it could not be expected to save him ; but his dismay was not any the less. At last I said :

“ Your god is gone : accept the true God, Who can never be lost, Who will protect you for evermore.”

Instead he replied, “ Oh, I'll buy another ! ”

Think of it !—

A stone god !

A stone god asleep and stolen !

A god to be purchased !

What more do we need to illustrate India's gross darkness, her superstition and ignorance ? Surely, surely, the time has come for giving these people bread for the stones they worship, even the Bread of Life.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE CAMERA IN THE PALACE.

FOR her operation the Rani took off all her ornaments except one set of bangles and a nose ornament, which hung heart shape over her mouth and which no married woman removes during the lifetime of her husband ; yet her vanity departed not, for she had surreptitious glances at herself in a hand mirror. She liked her bandages tied in shapely knots, and when the doctor encouraged her fancy by bringing her a coloured bow of ribbon to wear she was exceedingly well pleased. Once she tried on my black hat and thoroughly enjoyed the quaint result.

She was frequently coveting English clothes, so the Rajah sent one day and got her an English outfit. The costume was a grey shot with purple ; some of the necessary garments were missing, but all the external things were complete and impossibly matched in colour ; but, unfortunately, we never had the joy of seeing the donning of these garments.

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The final vanity, the taking of the photograph, must now be described.

The Rani was sufficiently recovered to be photographed, and Miss Horsfall, our Financial Secretary, kindly offered to bring her camera for this purpose. The morning was very inauspicious : it was raining heavily, and darker clouds were hovering in the minds of the palace inmates, for the Rajah thought that his Rani was not making sufficiently rapid progress. It was his idea that after the operation the Rani would become a girl again, with a return of all her pristine beauty. In his foolish and affectionate banter with her, which sat badly on such hoary hairs, he told her once that they were being married again, and that she was the young and beautiful bride he was bringing to his palace.

When Miss Horsfall and I arrived the Rani, though previously told, was not ready for the photograph to be taken ; indeed, she was in one of her petulant moods, bordering on rank obstinacy. Talking seemed to produce no effect, and I was afraid that Miss Horsfall's time was being wasted, but at last a happy thought struck us. A feminine failing might be used to conjure good humour back ; so I suggested that Miss Horsfall should be shown her jewels. The cloud

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began to lift, the little wooden box, quite unsuited to the golden treasure it had to guard, was brought, a very ordinary key was inserted in a lock which an amateur burglar could have picked, and the beautiful jewels were exposed to view.

Then the Rani had to be told that Miss Horsfall wished to see how they were worn, and, one by one, earrings, chains, bangles, armlets, and head ornaments found their way from the box on to her person. The cajoling had to go on, and it took time, but time is of no consequence in a palace ; with Browning, the Rani says :

Leave time for dogs and apes.

Then a mirror was brought, another feeder of vanity ; and when all was completed we said, " What is to prevent your being photographed now ? " and, while the surprise of the question was still upon her, her chair was moved to a suitable position and the photograph taken.

Then we walked downstairs to photograph the Rajah at his worship. He was seated on the floor, with his religious paraphernalia before him : bunches of faded flowers, a little earthen plate of incense, a cocoanut, sundry little gods and goddesses of the earth, earthy, the tutelary god, the Salagrama, a stone, and a pile of papyrus with Sanscrit liturgy. Beside him was the priest, well

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marked with sandalwood paste and ashes on his forehead, chest and arms, with his sacred thread denoting his twice-born position over his shoulder, and his religious regalia before him.

The interruption our coming made was scarcely noticed, because personal vanity was to be gratified. A sheet was put up for a background, the palace officials gathered round, and the Rajah, seated in tailor fashion with only a white loin-cloth, formed the centre of the group. How Miss Horsfall in the dull light of that inner room was able on a cloudy day to get an impression on her plate is still a mystery to us. Then the officials were photographed, and the priest, all alone, with his sacred papyrus in his hand.

So the camera cleared the clouds in the palace that day. For many reasons, however, it has not been possible to put a photograph of the Rajah and the Rani in this book.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE SACRED FIRE.

ONE other source of comfort to the Rani in case she should die was the fact that some ten years before she and the Rajah had made an offering by fire, which fire was still kept alive, and the first of them to die would have the funeral pyre lit with its sacred flame. It would then be useless for anyone else, and would have no power to save from rebirths.

The sacrifice had been carried out in the following way : they had purchased a piece of land, built a shrine on it, and then spent some days in prayer, fastings, and purifications. Then an offering was made, and the fire which consumed it, she said, came down from heaven ; but in less imaginative language it was a fire produced by friction, the priest obtaining this result by the primitive method in vogue before matches were manufactured.

Severe were the abstinences necessary and many were the rituals essential to the right performance of this offering ; and all this was done to save them from transmigration and secure them annihilation in the next world !

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Hindu wisdom says that "we are but dreams of dreaming which no real person dreams. We are nothing, and the sooner we cease to have the horrible feeling of being something the better. Everything is illusion, and the sooner the illusion fades and we sink back into Brahma or the eternal place of nothingness, the sooner we shall escape the tormenting deceit called Life." I asked the Rani why she did not commit suicide if she believed that everything was mere "Maya" (illusion)? She said that annihilation is not a substitute for hell: it is heaven, and the object of all aspiration! Even if she were an illusion, to poison her imaginary body would only prolong the illusory agony, for she would be reborn and the form of her illusion would depend on the life she had lived in the past, and might probably be something more unwelcome than her present illusion. To her, suicide, therefore, would not be destruction of the illusion but a baser transformation.

Who toiled a slave may come anew a Prince  
For gentle worthiness and merit won;  
Who ruled a king may wander earth in rags  
For things done and undone.

Higher than Indra's you may lift your lot,  
And sink it lower than the worm or gnat;  
The end of many myriad lives is this,  
The end of myriads that

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Only, while turns the wheel invisible,  
No pause, no peace, no staying place can be ;  
Who mounts may fall, who falls will mount, the spokes  
Go round unceasingly.

Early Aryan settlers had no belief in transmigration. It is not mentioned in the Vedas, but when the philosophic cycle of their history (six centuries before Christ) was reached, and the problem of pain confronted them with its apparent injustices, the philosophers attempted to interpret suffering through this doctrine of transmigration, namely, that the deed determines the destiny and the future incarnation of the soul. The soul may pass through eighty-four millions of incarnations before it attains Nirvana or rest, and the law determining the sequence is " Karma " or the deeds done. " For stealing grain a man may become a rat ; for stealing honey a stinging insect ; for stealing meat a vulture. He who is cruel in this birth will appear as a tiger in the next ; who steals a horse for quicker transit is born lame for slower purpose ; who purloins scents reappears as a musk rat, more odorous than he desires. . . . The soul may crawl as a snake, bloom as a flower, roam as a tiger, writhe like a demon, or reign as a god : no embodiment is incongruous or impossible." No wonder a

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Brahmin thinks he is somebody, for how carefully must he have lived and accrued merit in previous existences to arrive at the stage of being a man, a priest, and a god !

One frequently hears patients say that every disease is due to some sin either in this or in a previous existence. Perhaps the objection of high-caste people to take the life of animals and insects has its root in a subtle feeling that these may, after all, be the embodied illusions of their unregenerate relatives !

How different their thought of rebirth from the Christian belief of being born again ! Rebirth to them is penal, the consequence of " Karma " : regeneration to us is salvation and peace, in consequence of the deeds of Another ; and this is obtained through forgiveness of man's past deeds. Transmigration does not know forgiveness, for it never spares and its consequences are inevitable and inexorable ; while God's law is retributive, yet by the provision of the birth in due time of a Saviour these consequences are annulled, and grace, instead of law, provides a remedy.

To save herself countless cycles of illusory existence and to stem the tide of rebirths, which would fling her into a repetition of the most horrible and prolonged experiences, the Rani undertook

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the ordeal of the *fire sacrifice*, which takes the soul immediately to Brahma (the One Being), and so cuts off the unbearable, intermediate, illusory births.

“ This is the philosophic view of transmigration. It is this which gives eternal nothingness its charm ! Only from the human stage of illusion could escape be found in repose. Thought must become concentrated upon Brahma, and then in the course of ages of ever-deepening repose consciousness of self will fade away into the perfect peace of the only true Being, which is Brahma, or absolute Nothing ! ”

I told her what Heaven really is, not a place of absorbed individuality, but a place where the soul recovers its individuality and is clothed in the glory of God for eternal fellowship, service, and praise.

If their faith is illusion, they are greatly deluded and the darkness of their minds is dark indeed. Imagine the superficial reasoning that suggests leaving India to its own faith, which has nothing to satisfy the intellect, the heart, or the conscience. When everything is illusion, surely they need, and with a great immediacy, teaching concerning Reality, Truth, God, Salvation, and Heaven !

## CHAPTER XIII.

### PURIFICATION !

WHEN the Rani was sufficiently convalescent she had to be ceremonially purified, as she had been touched by non-caste peoples and even eaten food from their hands. I was very anxious to see this ceremony performed ; the Rani seemed anxious that I should not, but my pleadings prevailed. She apologised for having to go through such a performance when she had been touched by such pure hands, but said she must adhere to custom !

The priest went to the river Ganges the evening before, and after giving offerings to the goddess Kali and feeding some Brahmins, he bathed, and brought home some water from the sacred river for the next day's bath.

To the Hindu, sin is a transgression regarding some ceremonial or social duty. It is a greater sin to touch a non-caste person than to tell a lie. It is sinful to eat food before washing, to receive food from one of another caste, to kill a cow or

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to take the life of any creature. The greatest pollution comes through water. The question of morality does not enter into the Hindu conception of sin. So the Rani was now expiating one of these ceremonial transgressions.

Early next morning she awoke to the ceremonial before her. Her first introduction was to the barber of the palace. She must not see him, so a screen was put up and an offering of fruit, rice, and a cloth were placed in front of the screen, and the barber was called to perform the office of cutting the Rani's finger- and toe-nails. Her hands were thrust through the screen, and he manicured these, and then the feet were exposed to view in the same fashion. After the nails had been cut the feet were patterned with red saffron, with lines running on the inner and outer sides and along the base of the toes. After this operation the offerings presented became the barber's.

I must digress to mention how important these barbers are. The barbers worship the female deities and walk through fire in their worship at certain seasons of the year. This fire-walking is an extraordinary feat : it is supposed that they anoint their feet with some unguent before they descend into the pits where the bonfire has been made. Some, however, deny this statement.

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Then a wedding is incomplete without a barber. He does the manicuring and shaving, and in some cases presents the new cloth to the bridegroom after washing his feet. He officiates as priest to low-caste people and ties the marriage cord, for shaving was originally not a mere question of personal toilette but a sacrament, and the priestly function was combined with that of the barber.

After the Rani had been through the barber's hands, her body was smeared all over with cow-dung as an expiation for her sin of ceremonial defilement, and then bathed, without soap, in the muddy waters of the Ganges ! Such is the custom when ceremonial observances and social usages are violated. In order to obtain purification a man who crosses the sea has to eat a small ball composed of the five products of the cow—namely, the milk, curds, butter, urine, and dung ! Can anything more detestable be imagined ? “ It is the teaching of the shastras that obedience to caste is the fulfilment of duty and the summum bonum of life.” Each of the 2,378 main castes and forty-three nationalities in India has its own sub-laws regarding caste performances.

The sacred Ganges water, which the priest had made more sacred by incantation, was then sprinkled on everything the Rani used, bed

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mattress, pillows, rugs, and boxes, and these were declared *clean*.

On the morning of the purification the Rajah took the bottled tumour to the sacred Ganges, and it was committed to its waters, as it was once a portion of the Rani's body, and so would also need purification ! One's imagination can easily be disgusted by the thought of this floating tumour in the river, the sacred waters of which were being drunk by the religious Hindus around.

Next she was led to the priest, where with the usual accessories, and a few more, he was awaiting her to perform the finishing ceremony of the atonement.

The Rani sat on the floor, and I was given a chair near her, but was not allowed to touch her. Then began the droning of liturgies, the ringing of bells, pouring out of water, and finally a small silver cup with a dark liquid in it was handed to the Rani to drink. I asked what it was, for it is not interrupting to ask questions during these performances, and was told it was cowdung ! I felt horrified, and told her that she was more defiled now than ever, and needed purification medically. The priest was very nervous over it all : he said he knew I would not regard all this ceremony in any sacred light, and he hastened on with the

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prayers and liturgies. I had to speak on the true atonement. It seemed so dreadful that any reasonable being should imagine the excreta of animals as expiation for sin !

Of the incarnation which was the prelude to the atonement of the Son of God for the sins of the world they know nothing. To them I endeavoured to explain it all, but to no purpose apparently. They were pre-eminently satisfied with what they had—darkness, delusion, and final disappointment. Incarnation is only presented to them as “a continuous passion of the deity ; the absolute spirit for ever amuses itself with the ‘ sacred sport ’ of ever-changing emanations and manifestations,” and therefore the incarnations have practically no ethical or spiritual content.

After the ceremony the Rani touched me, but she did not allow us again to prepare her food, or feed her, or touch her cleansed vessels. The Brahmin women servants were paramount again, and we were regarded as a kind of “ un-touchables ” as far as food was concerned.

The position of a Christian in an Indian palace is a peculiarly difficult one. One sees the deep need, but it is difficult to meet it where smug satisfaction with the old order exists. We do not want

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to repel but to invite ; but to know how to meet the opposition without crushing it is a difficult task. It is difficult also to reconcile the old and the new ; one would like to preserve their traditions and ancestral beliefs if it can be done, but compromise is dangerous. To preach the simple gospel and leave these matters of tradition and creed to adjust themselves to the new relationship declared is a far less hazardous task. Hinduism is adjusting itself in many ways to modern conditions, and in many directions there is a great change which we welcome heartily.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE CHRISTIAN BENEDICTION.

THE Rajah and Rani said they would like a Christian benediction for the Rani before she left Calcutta for her home. I asked them whether they really thought the Christians' prayers would be effective, and they said, " The prayers of good people are always effective, and did we not, in spite of many essential differences, worship the One God ? " Accordingly a day was fixed for a sumptuous tea, and the Lady Secretaries of our Mission, the Doctor and Matron, and a few other Christian friends were invited to be present.

After the formal introductions to the Rani, who was dressed for the occasion in her robes and jewellery, we were each presented with a tiny button-hole of roses, and sprinkled with lavender. Then we all sat round the tea-table and the " benediction " began. The Rajah walked round the room ; but we could not ask him to partake in the ceremony, for the Rani cannot sit in his presence, and it would have meant a thorough

## THE CHRISTIAN BENEDICTION.

dislocation of all her plans, for she would have had to spend her time directing her courtesies to his vagaries, instead of to her guests. He had received the visitors downstairs. Mrs. Norledge, the wife of the B.M.S. Financial Secretary, brought her little boy to the "function." He was the salvation of the meeting from stiffness, for he was friendly with everyone, and even smiled on the Rani, talking to her and the other palace people about all sorts of things. He has an enviable knowledge of several languages, though so young.

The Benediction consisted of hymns, thanksgivings and prayers for the Rani's perfect recovery. It was a polyglot assembly, for some of the missionaries knew Hindi, others Urdu, others Bengali, and others again Uriya, and, of course, we all knew English. Hymns were sung in Urdu and Bengali, and were translated to the Rani. After this an English hymn was sung, which was also translated. Then we had prayers, these being offered in Bengali and Uriya. The greatest interest for the Rani in the prayer was to watch little Jack Norledge, who piously knelt down in Indian fashion while we prayed. She thought a child who could be so reverent in prayer must have been well trained, and there must be something in Christian prayer, after all.

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After this short service we had tea, in which the Rani did not join ; she retired to some distance with her retinue of women, and watched us. Jack offered her some chocolates, which she graciously received, but, of course, did not eat. When tea was over she came amongst us again, and presented the doctor with a beautiful bouquet of roses and maidenhair, and said "good-bye" to the guests. I stayed longer, and, as she was in the mood for it, I sang her several Uriya hymns and some English ones also, and then had a talk with her about spiritual things. She listened better than she had ever done before. The Rajah and the other men were much struck by the combined singing of the evening, and said it was so sweet as compared with Indian singing.

So ended the Benediction. In some senses it might seem valueless, but as a sign of the change in the attitude of these people towards Christianity it was a distinct advance. Their attitude to Christianity when I first met them years ago was almost hostile, so that we have cause for praise for this great change. I am sure that not one of us who attended there failed to remember in earnest prayer the needs of this household. God has mysterious ways of making Himself known, and we sincerely hope that some day their hearts may turn to Him.

## CHAPTER XV.

### CONCLUSION.

AFTER a somewhat prolonged convalescence the Rani was ready to return home. She took a careful inventory of all the things that had been purchased, and had them packed up to go with her. She took one or two motor rides to become accustomed to the movement of vehicles, and then, on a prescribed auspicious day and time, we drove to the station and took train for her Native State.

At the station it was difficult to preserve her "purdah" dignity, but after some trouble the stationmaster saw my dilemma, and lent us an invalid chair, which had to do duty, with my waterproof thrown over the Rani to act as purdah (imagine the perspiring effect of this when the temperature was at least 90° in the shade!), and the solemn procession began of carrying her to the railway carriage, which was some distance from the taxicab in which she had come to the station. She stood the journey bravely though not well,

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and the night was spent in holding her hand and comforting her.

I said "good-bye" to the Rani that night and returned to my station. She has written very loving letters to me since, but I await, with hope, the time when she will stretch out her hands to the living God.

\* \* \*

This concludes this brief episode of a peep behind the scenes in palace life, and incidentally a view of Hindu thought regarding the essential doctrines of their cult. One does not often get opportunities for such close contact with Hindu customs and ceremonials; but anyone who has once seen Hinduism *as it is* will realise, without reservation, that that religion is utterly futile to lead any soul into salvation or peace. This makes our responsibility regarding the people of India a pressing one, and we should hasten the time when this dependency of the British Crown shall be adequately supplied with help for its spiritual needs. Lord Palmerston, when Prime Minister, said, "It is not only our duty, but our interest, to promote the diffusion of Christianity as far as possible throughout the length and breadth of India." The wonderful loyalty of India over the

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war, its willingness to shed its blood for its Emperor, show that India has instincts and qualities which are invaluable ; but the people need the Divine touch to make them a nation of glory to the praise of Him Who died to save India.

All this increases our obligation a hundred-fold to give India Christ. Herbert Edwardes said in Exeter Hall in 1860, after the Mutiny, that God's voice was : " India is your charge. I am the Lord of the World. I give kingdoms to whom I list. I give India into the hands of England. I did not give it solely for your benefit. I give it for the benefit of My millions of creatures. I give it to you, to whom I have given the best thing man can have—the Bible, the knowledge of the only true God. I give it to you that you may communicate this light and knowledge and truth to these My heathen creatures . . . *Christianize your policy.*"

The greater call is to Christian missions to redouble their efforts for the salvation of this people. Even the immense strain on finances which the war has produced ought not to lead to any deficiency of funds, for is not India shedding her blood for her Emperor, and so proving herself worthy of deeds of sacrifice from us, and words of cheer and salvation ?

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There is a special call for the reinforcement of medical missions in India. The opportunities for service are manifold, especially for women doctors, so that the sufferers in the purdahs may receive, not only the ministry of healing, but the teachings of the glorious Gospel of the Son of God.



